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ABSTRACT

Surprisingly little research has been done on Little Black Sambo and the meager material is often contradictory. This study examines the origins of the book and traces its history in the United States through its overlapping periods of popularity and controversy. The story of Little Black Sambo, written in 1898 by Helen Bannerman, a white English woman, describes a dark skinned child's adventures with four tigers. This simple story, first published in England is 1899, has been the subject of public controversy for over 30 years. Although it was one of the most popular stories for preschoolers and primary graders during the first half of the twentieth century, many individuals and groups later called for its removal from library shelves. Conscientious professionals involved with children and books listened carefully to reports of potential harm. In spite of the resistance of some librarians to what they felt was undue censorship, the book was withdrawn from many schools and libraries. However, attitudes toward Sambo are still decidedly mixed, and it is widely available in book stores, public libraries, schools and other areas of the public scene. It is hoped that the view of the facts and theories surrounding the book made here will allow readers to examine the continued use of this story. (Author/JM)

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LITTLE BLACK SAMBO: A Closer Look

A History of Helen Bannerman's The Story of Little Black Sambo and Its Popularity/Controversy in the United States

by Phyllis J. Yuill

UD 016 023

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CONTENTS

ORIGINS 2

POPULARITY 5

PROTEST AND CONTROVERSY 11
Illustrations 15
Names 20
Theme 24

SAMBO TODAY AND TOMORROW 28

AFTERWORD 33

FOOTNOTES 36

Appendix A.
LITTLE BLACK SAMBO 40

Appendix B.
PUBLISHING HISTORY
In the United States 43
In Other Countries or Languages 45
In Collected Works 45
Other Adaptations 46
Little Black Sambo Stories by Other Authors 46

Appendix C.
OTHER BOOKS
BY HELEN BANNERMAN 47

Appendix D.
RECOMMENDATIONS OF LITTLE BLACK SAMBO IN BIBLIOGRAPHIES 49

Appendix E.
ILLUSTRATORS OF US EDITIONS 52

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

The Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) was founded in 1966 by writers, editors, illustrators, teachers and parents committed to affecting basic change in books and other media. CIBC programs are designed to promote children's books and learning materials that reflect the realities of a multiracial, multicultural society, and which embody the principles of cultural pluralism. CIBC programs include:

• *The Bulletin, which features critical analyses of racist and sexist stereotypes* perpetuated through children's books. Also published in the *Bulletin* are reviews of new children's books and learning materials, findings of CIBC studies and research projects, and recommended home and classroom materials for combatting racism and sexism.

• *Consciousness-raising conferences and university courses* for parents, publishers and educational professionals. Resource specialists and scholars representative of U.S. minorities—Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian American, Native American and women of all races—focus on the stereotypes, distortions and omissions commonly found in children's trade and text books and on the development of new criteria for analyzing educational materials.

• *A national resource and referral center*—**The Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators.** The Center collects, adapts and publishes books, pamphlets, lesson plans and teaching strategies to eliminate racism and sexism and to develop pluralism in education. The Resource Center provides consultants and conducts workshops and teacher training programs. A catalog listing all materials and services of the Resource Center will be sent on request.

INTRODUCTION

The Story of Little Black Sambo, written in 1898 by Helen Bannerman, a white Englishwoman, describes a dark-skinned child's adventures with four tigers. Wearing his new set of brightly-colored clothes and carrying an umbrella for a walk in the jungle. Sambo finds that he must give each piece of beloved finery to the tigers to keep from being eaten. Jealous over their new possessions and increasingly enraged, the tigers discard the clothing and chase each other around a tree so ferociously that they turn to melted butter. While Sambo retrieves his garments, the butter is salvaged by Sambo's father, Black Jumbo, and is used to cook pancakes by Sambo's mother, Black Mumbo. These are so delicious that Mumbo has twenty-seven, Jumbo consumes fifty-five, and hungry Sambo devours one hundred sixty-nine. (For complete story, see Appendix A.)

This simple story, first published in England in 1899, has been the subject of public controversy for over thirty years. Although it was one of the most popular stories for pre-schoolers and primary-graders during the first half of the twentieth century, many individuals and groups later called for its removal from library shelves. Conscientious professionals involved with children and books listened carefully to reports of potential harm. In spite of the resistance of some librarians to what they felt was undue censorship, the book was withdrawn from many schools and libraries. However, attitudes toward *Sambo* are still decidedly mixed and it is widely available in book stores, public libraries, schools, and other areas of the public scene.

Over seventy-five years after original publication, *The Story of Little Black Sambo* holds a unique place in the history of children's literature, not only as an exceedingly popular story which fell into disrepute, but as a symbol of the value judgments faced by librarians, teachers, and parents when evaluating children's books in relation to heightened social awareness.

This study examines the origins of the book and traces its history in the United States through the overlapping periods of popularity and controversy. Surprisingly little research has been done on *Little Black Sambo*, and the meager material is often contradictory. It is hoped that this dispassionate view of the facts and theories surrounding the book will allow readers to examine the continued use of this story in the context of our multicultural society.

ORIGINS

Published information about the original author/illustrator of *The Story of Little Black Sambo* and of the circumstances surrounding its creation is limited, contradictory, and often erroneous. The most detailed and convincing report has been prepared by Elizabeth Smith, a BBC radio producer and biographer of Helen Bannerman. Smith interviewed the Bannerman "children" (now in their 70's and 80's), examined original material, and documented the background of the author and her work.[1]

Born in Edinburgh on February 25, 1863, Helen Brodie Cowan Watson spent her early years on the Portuguese island of Madeira, where her father was a minister to the Free Church of Scotland community. When she was ten, she returned to Scotland for a formal education. Since women were not fully admitted to Scottish universities in the 1880's, Helen followed the only procedure open to female scholars. She arranged outside study, sitting for university exams and achieving an L.L.A. degree. In 1889, at the age of twenty-six, she married her childhood friend, William Bannerman, a doctor in the Indian Medical Service.

The couple lived and worked in India, except for periodic home leaves. Four children were born—Janet in 1893, Day in 1896, Pat in 1900, and Robert in 1902. At the age of eight or nine, each was sent back to live with an aunt in Edinburgh for education. This long separation from parents was enlivened by a weekly letter for each child, usually illustrated by their mother's watercolor sketches. Delayed in India because of World War I, the Bannermans returned to Scotland in 1917 where Helen lived until her death in 1946.

While in India, the Bannermans followed the British custom of taking the children to "hill-stations" when the weather was unbearably hot or when there was potential danger from disease. In 1898, when Janet was about five and Day two years old, Helen left the girls in the care of a nurse at a small mountain resort and returned to Madras by train to be with her husband. During her homeward journey, *The Story of Little Black Sambo* took shape in her mind.

As a child looking at the large and cumbersome picture books of the time, Helen had wished for a small-sized book to fit comfortably in her hands, with the text and matching illustrations conveniently printed on opposite pages. She created such a little book from her story and sent it to her absent daughters. Later, a family friend persuaded Helen to allow her to take the book to England and offer it for publication.

A publisher agreed to produce it only if Helen would sell the copyright. She was reluctant, especially since an author friend of her father had warned her never to relinquish the rights to her first book. Finally, she consented and agreed to the sale for a nominal five or ten pounds, an act which she later deeply regretted.

The Story of Little Black Sambo was first published by Grant Richards in London during October 1899 as the fourth book in the small-sized "Dumpy" series, edited by E.V. Lucas. It enjoyed instant success, was reprinted in November 1899 and again in September 1900, this time in a thicker edition with a separate leaf for each page. Claiming over 21,000 copies in print, the publisher produced yet another printing in October 1900, with subsequent reissues in the following years.[2]

By 1900, *The Story of Little Black Sambo* had been published in the U.S. by Frederick A. Stokes, of New York City, who had purchased the rights from Grant Richards. No remuneration went to Bannerman. No one could have predicted the great popularity of this simple story. A profusion of U.S. editions by various publishers appeared during the first half of the twentieth century. (See Appendix B.) Besides the Stokes "authorized edition" (a duplication of the original Bannerman/Grant Richards book with a different cover), there were at least twenty-seven different English-language versions published between 1905 and 1953, including such variations as inexpensive paperbound volumes, novelty books with pop-up pictures or animated illustrations, and "talking books" with records. Dramatizations were published and recorded, and the story was included in anthologies. At least two companies marketed additional Sambo stories written by other authors. Each publisher had its own (or more than one) illustrator for *Little Black Sambo*, and the appearance of locale and characters varied with each artist. There were translations into a variety of languages, including French, Spanish, Dutch, German, Hebrew, and Arabic. Many of the versions of *The Story of Little Black Sambo* published in the U.S. did not credit Bannerman as author, and since the book was never copyrighted here in her name, she received no income from its U.S. sales.

Editorial Molina Barcelona, Spain @ 1962. This edition is still in circulation and widely exported.

3

The *Story of Little Black Sambo* was followed by a steady stream of stories originally written and illustrated by Bannerman for her children and subsequently published in England and the U.S. as *Sambo*-sized little books: *The Story of Little Black Mingo* (Stokes 1902), *The Story of Little Black Quibba* (Stokes 1903), *The Story of Little Kettlehead* (Stokes 1904), *Pat and the Spider* (Stokes 1905), *The Story of the Teasing Monkey* (Stokes 1907), *The Story of Little Black Quasha* (Stokes 1908), and *The Story of Little Black Bobtail* (Stokes 1909). None gained the popularity of her first story, although *Bobtail* was the best known of the lot. (See Appendix C.)

In 1936, Bannerman, who was living in Edinburgh with her daughter, was persuaded by Stokes to write another Sambo story. The new book, *Sambo and the Twins*, was received with nearly unanimous acclaim by book reviewers. In 1942, four years before Bannerman's death, Stokes published *The Jumbo Sambo*, containing six of her stories in a larger format: "The Story of Little Black Sambo," ". . . Sambo and the Twins," ". . . Little Black Quasha," ". . . Little Black Bobtail," ". . . the Teasing Monkey," and ". . . Little Kettlehead."

Finally, in 1966, *The Story of Little White Squibba* was presented to the public by Bannerman's British publishers, Chatto & Windus. The unfinished manuscript and illustrations had been found in her lawyer's safe. Similar in plot to *Sambo* and the other stories, and meant perhaps to be a humorous spoof on their themes, the book concerns a young white girl's adventurous walk in the jungle. By this time opposition to the Sambo books had become widespread in the U.S., and *The Story of Little White Squibba* is the only Bannerman title which was never published here.

As Helen Bannerman saw white Squibba and her mother vs Black Sambo and his mother.

POPULARITY

In the years following its publication in the U.S., *Little Black Sambo* became intensely popular with librarians, teachers, and the public. It was included in standard lists of recommended children's books from early in the century through the late 1960's. (See Appendix D for sample listings.)

From the beginning, well-known librarians were actively involved in promoting its use. Copyrighted in 1909 and into a third edition by 1912, Gertrude Arnold's *Mother's List of Books for Children* included *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. Anne Carroll Moore of the New York Public Library, Caroline Hewins of the Hartford Public Library, Clara Hunt of the Brooklyn Public Library, and Alice M. Jordan of the Boston Public Library were the advisors who examined the list and made suggestions.[3]

In 1927, a comparative study of "several of the best book lists prepared by both librarians and teachers for use in elementary schools" was compiled by a class in children's literature at Johns Hopkins.[4] The report included data showing that *Little Black Sambo* was recommended on five out of seven lists. No statement was made as to why the remaining two lists excluded the book.

Sambo was recommended by the American Library Association in its *A.L.A. Catalog* from 1912 through 1936, when publication was suspended. It appeared on a U.S. Department of Interior book list in 1940.[5]

In a 1942 *Horn Book* article, Frances Clark Sayers, of the New York Public Library, described the delight and joy that picture books hold for young children, with Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* placed prominently in her list of suggested stories.[6]

The Association for Childhood Education placed *Sambo* on their lists of inexpensive books for children during the 1940's and 1950's. Included, during a period from 1937 to 1959, were the editions by Stokes/Lippincott, Platt & Munk, and Simon & Schuster's Little Golden Library.

May Hill Arbuthnot supported the book in the 1948 and 1953 editions of *Children's Books Too Good to Miss*, published by Western Reserve University Press.

The Child Study Association listed *Sambo* in their 1962 and 1965 editions of *The Children's Bookshelf: A Guide to Books for and about Children.*

Well into the 1960's the title was listed in major commercial bibliographies of children's literature. Although Wilson's *Children's Catalog* dropped it from the 12th edition in 1971, it was included in the first edition (1909) through the 11th edition (1966). (From 1930 through 1960, it was marked with an asterisk designating that it was "especially recommended by the consultants." From 1946 through 1956, it received a double asterisk, making it "doubly recommended.") Bowker's *Best Books for Children* included *Sambo* in all editions from 1959 through 1968.

Although book reviews of *The Story of Little Black Sambo* and the other early books by Bannerman are not available, the acclaim by critics given to the publication of *Sambo and the Twins* (Stokes, 1936) is indicative of the popularity of her work. In this story, twins are new additions to the family and are named Little Black Woof and Little Black Moof. Cared for lovingly by a delighted Sambo, they are stolen by wicked monkeys and are carried into the top of a tall tree in the jungle, from whence Sambo rescues them with the assistance of a kindly eagle.

The critical reviews were favorable and, in many cases, effusive. The *Book Review Digest* from 1936 cites ten reviews. When examined in the original sources, five are highly favorable, four are affirmative, and only one is mixed with some negative comment. Perhaps most ecstatic was Edith Rees, a children's librarian in New York, who wrote:

> Probably there is no picture book whose story and pictures have become so completely one in the minds of millions of boys and girls, men and women as that old and ever-new favorite *Little Black Sambo*. And now, after long years of silence, Mrs. Bannerman has done it again! *Sambo and the Twins*. . . , a new story of *Little Black Sambo*, is every bit as good as the first one. One feels like bursting into a song and dance and shouting superlatives to the winds, but perhaps we should leave that to the children.[7]

May Lamberton Becker was not as emotional in her critique, but her response was as positive:

> *Sambo and the Twins* has precisely the same kind of little pictures in color in the text, and just the same kind of fun in the story, as the dear favorite of so many nurseries for so long.[8]
>
> If Helen Bannerman could overhear, rising from the children's room of any public library in this country, the rustle and delighted cries that greet the news of a new Little Black Sambo story, she would realize how important a place her young hero holds in the world of childhood.[9]

The publisher's advertisement in the November 1936 *Horn Book* claims that Anne Carroll Moore called it "the event of the year" in children's books, and a book jacket for Lippincott's reprint of *Little Black Sambo* also quotes her as saying about *Sambo and the Twins*: "A triumphant success! The event of the year among children's books. Even better than the original *Story of Little Black Sambo*." Also in the November 1936 *Horn Book*, Moore included *Twins* with nine other books in a list of the outstanding children's books published during the year, all of which she believed offered "originality, sound ideas, integrity of workmanship, excellent production and honest appeal to children," with particular reference to *Twins*: "A new adventure of Little Black Sambo as completely satisfying as Mrs. Bannerman's first book published in 1900."[10]

In the book review section of the *Horn Book* issue cited above, *Sambo and the Twins* is marked with a horn, indicating "highest honors in the opinion of the editors." The other picture books so marked in this issue were *Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain*, *Henner's Lydia*, and *Billy Butter*.[11]

Anne Eaton, children's book reviewer for *The New York Times*, sounded the only negative note while praising *Little Black Sambo*:

> Not often do we have the experience of meeting again almost a generation later a cherished book character. For nearly thirty years "Little Black Sambo" has delighted countless boys and girls who have thrilled to his tactful manipulation of the tigers and chuckled over his appetite for pancakes. A somewhat older Sambo now finds himself acting as guardian and mentor for the twins . . . a tale that 5 to 7 year olds find appealing, even though it lacks something of the inspired simplicity and dramatic quality of the first Little Black Sambo story.[12]

Other favorable reviews appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Booklist*, *Atlantic*, and *The Springfield Republican*.

What is the special appeal that made *The Story of Little Black Sambo* such a phenomenal success? It has all the elements of a good story for young children: a sympathetic hero, simple and exciting plot, repetitive rhythm, abundant action, and a satisfying conclusion. Huck and Kuhn's *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* comments, "In this fantasy, one absurd incident after another occurs, excitement is high, and the ending is satisfying."[13] May Hill Arbuthnot, in her second and third editions of *Children and Books*, elaborates:

> This story, which might almost have come out of some folklore collection, has about it an effortless perfection which baffles analysis . . . The formula is: extreme simplicity of language, short, cadenced sentences with enough repetition to give the pleasant rhythm little children enjoy, a plot full of mild and funny surprises, considerable suspense, and complete satisfaction at the end. Still, the easy charm of this unaffected, convincing little tale eludes us . . . Sambo is happy and completely triumphant, the envy of all young hero worshipers—he outwits the tigers over and over. He has the right kind of parents, just the kind every child would like to have. And in the history of children's literature *Little Black Sambo* remains an important innovation. It has theme, plot, and felicitous style. The text of the story and the pictures are perfectly synchronized. It was the first picture-story and a model for that type of literary composition.[14]

For this last reason, Arbuthnot included it in her list of books that were "turning points in children's liberature."

The innovative format has also been noted by British experts in children's literature and most recently by the U.S. bookseller and antiquarian Justin Schiller in an article on the details of first publication of *Little Black Sambo*:

> The fact remains that in 1899 *Black Sambo* was a revolutionary-style picture book. Compared with its contemporary school of illustrators—Crane, Greenaway, Caldecott—the pictures are simple yet bold. The format of the book encouraged its handling by young owners, and the pages alternated between text and illustrations in a manner very appealing and appropriate to its compact size. It even seems possible that Beatrix Potter's animal books, which began in 1901 with the privately printed *Peter Rabbit*, were at least influenced by the overall design of this book and subsequently, so was the general success of the entire "Dumpy" Series.[15]

Another point in the book's favor was its directness and lack of sentimentality. In an article in *Harper's* on the topic of superfluous emotion in children's books, author Phyllis McGinley commented:

> And at the very lowest age-levels there is no better book that I can think of than *Little Black Sambo*, which is no more sentimental than *The Way of All Flesh*.[16]

An examination of all of Bannerman's stories reveals no gushy emotionalism or "sweetening" of any kind. In fact, the two Sambo stories are the mildest of the lot. In the others, there are gory and violent acts portrayed in text and pictures. In *Little Black Mingo*, a wicked old woman is swallowed by a crocodile and both are blown to bits in an explosion. *Little Black Quibba* includes a scene in which an evil snake and elephant are pulled apart and dropped onto sharp rocks from a cliff. *Little Kettlehead* is about a naughty white girl whose head is burned off in the kitchen fire. In *The Teasing Monkey*, falling rocks and coconuts injure a greedy bear and dangerous lions. Perhaps most gory is the scene in *Little Black Quasha* when a group of menacing tigers are provoked into fighting each other: "Ears and tails were flying in the air, hair and blood were strewn upon the ground."[17] Even in the less violent *Little Black Bobtail*, a pursuing polar bear is shot by a cannon. In all of the stories with black children, the hero or heroine survives the threat of death by vicious animals.

Another appealing factor may have been that *Sambo* and the other children act alone, or with the help of friendly animals, but without adult intervention. Sambo is the only character with a happy home life; the others are orphans or have no visible parents, although one has a sick mother. The sense of independence and adventure may have stimulated young listeners or readers.

In her 1971 book on children's literature, *Down the Rabbit Hole*, Selma Lanes discusses *Little Black Sambo* extensively. She feels that it is the very "blackness" of Sambo which caused its success in the U.S.

> Surely it had something to do with the fact that, for the first time, a story had caught American parents and children off their guard, allowing them to recognize freely the humanity of black people . . . We could all approve of Sambo and his family without feeling either guilty or anxious. Quick wit and intelligence were no threat in a black boy from the primitive and faraway land of tigers, as they might have been in someone black walking down an American city street. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so the human soul rebels against evasion and dishonesty. By the time Sambo arrived on these shores, the slaves had been free for some forty years. Thousands of blacks had left the plantation of the rural South to form an observable element in most cities' populations. Yet they might all have been invisible for the recognition they received as fellow human beings in white America. Sambo was taken to everyone's heart precisely because he allowed us to acknowledge what we knew inside but avoided confronting: that black people were human beings just like us. In loving Sambo, unreservedly, in some way every white had the feeling that he was also accepting the black man as a fellow human being. The nursery bookshelf was integrated, and no prejudice could be

said to exist in a home where *Little Black Sambo* and *Peter Rabbit* stood side by side on the same shelf.

Because *Little Black Sambo* unquestionably helped white American children and adults to see black people in a new way, possibly for the first time, the book was, on the whole, a positive force . . . to make white children recognize an otherwise unacknowledged fact—the existence in our own lives of black people—even if not in the most sensitive manner possible. Certain stereotypes are, on balance, broadening. . . . they often serve to make large numbers of perfectly ordinary persons, with the perfectly standard prejudices of their times, open eyes and ears just a little bit more than they might otherwise have done to realities they would rather not face.

As a teaching tool for white children, then, surely Sambo rated A-plus in his day.[18]

There is no way to document whether such a conscious or subconscious *rejection* of racism really existed in the minds of adults who read the book to their children. Possibly, the popularity of *Sambo* was due to an *acceptance* of racism and a fascination with the distorted images of blacks presented by the entertainment industry.

The "black-face" minstrel shows, which had begun with T.D. Rice and his highly popular "Jump Jim Crow" in 1830, were an intensely loved entertainment during the mid-1800's, reaching a peak in the 1870's.

In many cities, in spite of the great number of new companies springing up each year, the rage for minstrelsy was so great that minstrel companies were forced to give morning concerts and "three-a-day" shows in order to satisfy the theatre-going public.[19]

Cupples and Leon, 1917 Sambo. Note the similarity to standard minstrel make-up.

The minstrel performers learned to adapt their characterizations to the desires of their white audiences. Thus, their performances reflected exaggerated stereotypes, rather than accurate portrayal, of black people.

> Many of the famous minstrel men were Northern-born-and-reared, or foreign-born immigrant white men, who had almost no first-hand knowledge of the Negro's manner of life. The subjects and ideas of many minstrel shows, in their later development at least, were Caucasian, and not Negro. Moreover, most of the great minstrel songs of the decade when minstrelsy was the leading form of entertainment, were written by white men, and only some of the earlier "Negro" songs had any original Negro basis.[20]

Although the popularity of minstrel shows gradually declined by the end of the century, they were still very much in existence after 1900. Al Jolson, who first appeared on a stage in 1899, was for many years a vaudevillian and performer in Lew Dockstader's Minstrels. He found popular success in 1909, when he sang "Mammy" in black-face.[21] His appearance in *The Jazz Singer*, the first film with sound, in 1927 could only have made familiarity with his comic "black-face" style more widespread. Silent films of the period also emphasized the image of the black people as shiftless, ignorant buffoons, even when the cast was all black, as in the "Sambo Series" (1909-1911) and the "Rastus Series" (about 1910), both farces produced by Sigmund Lubin.[22] Lanes notes that "pickaninny dolls" were popular in the 1930's.[23] Certainly this fascination with black people as naive, carefree, humorous characters must have had some influence on the popular regard for *Little Black Sambo*, especially since so many versions of *Sambo* (eleven were published in only five years between 1930 and 1935) changed the locale to Africa or the southern U.S. Rather than providing a more realistic basis for looking at black people, as Lanes assumes, perhaps *Sambo* fit quite easily into the popular public image.

Lanes' analysis cannot explain the book's continued popularity through the 50's and 60's, long after its stereotypes had been challenged. As noted in Appendix D, the title continued on many recommended lists of children's books until the late 1960's. Of course, there were significant bibliographies in which it never appeared, such as Nancy Larrick's *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*, first published in 1958, and the Bro-Dart Foundation's *Elementary School Library Collection*, which began in 1965. All in all, however, a librarian maintaining a collection "by the book" would have had ample support to keep *Little Black Sambo* actively circulating. At least until the mid-1960's.

PROTEST AND CONTROVERSY

Public protest against the treatment of blacks in children's literature began to surface in the late 1930's. According to Augusta Baker, recently retired coordinator of children's services at the New York Public Library and a leading black librarian, "1937 and 1938 were the years when the interest in this whole subject was born."[24] There was a growing awareness of damaging influences on the attitudes and assumptions of children, both black and white. Charlemae Rollins, a black librarian for children at the Hall Branch of the Chicago Public Library, sounded the alarm nation-wide, in 1941, when her *We Build Together; a Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use* was published by the National Council of Teachers of English. She warned that the "plantation stories" of the turn of the century and other books for children in which blacks appeared as subservient characters served only to strengthen the prevalent image perpetrated by the stereotype presented to the public on stage and screen.[25] In New York City, at NYPL's 135th Street Branch in Harlem, Augusta Baker had been working to assemble the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection. The Collection was created, in Baker's words,

> to acquaint Negro boys and girls with their own heritage and racial achievements. It serves also to help white children gain a truer, more sympathetic picture of their fellow Americans.[26]

In 1942, author Eleanor Weakley Nolen publicly called attention to the potentially dangerous stereotypes in both character delineation and use of dialect in children's books.[27]

From these beginnings, protests grew against stereotypical treatment of blacks in all levels of literature. A comparison of the number of listings under the category "Negro in Literature" in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in *Education Index* reveals a sprinkling of interest in the 1930's, but a considerable flow of articles beginning with the 1940's.[28]

At first, *The Story of Little Black Sambo* was considered to be an exemplary model of a fresh, *positive* image for black children, when compared with the more negative books of the period, and in spite of the Indian locale of the original and "authorized version," its presence was accepted on lists of African American orientation. In 1935, the Division of School Libraries of the Tennessee State Department had prepared *The Negro; a Selected List for School Libraries of Books by or about the Negro in Africa and America*, upon the suggestion of the State Agent for Negro Schools. Requests poured in and by 1941, when a revised edition was published, 10,000 copies of the original list had been printed to meet the demand from "every state in the Union, and several foreign countries."[29] The introduction to this second edition states the rationale for the list:

> Many books have been written to describe the living and thinking of Negroes in America. This list is a careful selection of the best in that field for children and

young people. If Negro children are to acquire a knowledge and respect for the achievements of the members of their own race, it is essential that such books be made readily available to them . . . It is also desirable that white children have an appreciation of this race which makes up more than one fourth of the population of the South.[30]

Scrupulous care was taken to provide appropriate titles approved by leading African Americans:

> Librarians having access to large collections of books by and about the Negro were asked to suggest titles to be considered for the revision. From these recommendations a preliminary list of one hundred and seventy-five books was compiled. This list, together with the 1935 edition, was submitted to the twenty-one individuals designated by the State Agents for Negro Schools in the thirteen southern states to help in the revision . . . The tentative list . . . was sent to librarians in public elementary and high school libraries to ascertain what had been their experience . . . [The listed books were] read critically by the compilers. They have also been checked in standard library lists and in the Negroana collections at Fisk and Howard Universities and the Hall Branch of the Chicago Public Library. . . .
>
> Special attention has been given to pleasing and true-to-life illustrations, especially in books for little children.[31]

The list of advisors to this publication included Charlemae Rollins and the Director of the Department of Research of the National Urban League. Prominent in the list of picture-story books "about the Negro in Africa and America" was *The Story of Little Black Sambo*.

In 1943, Augusta Baker wrote an article about the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection, in which she stated her criteria for selection:

> It is the purpose of this collection to bring together books for children that give an unbiased, accurate, well-rounded picture of Negro life in all parts of the world. Accordingly, these books have been chosen with three points in mind—language, theme, and illustration.[32]

Included in the list are *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, *The Story of Little Black Bobtail*, and *Sambo and the Twins*, with this annotation:

> Tiny, author-illustrated books about the adventures that befall engaging little black children. Favorites of pre-school and very young readers. There is no caricature in the story.[33]

Baker indicated in a recent interview that she had had reservations about the Bannerman books early in her career, but she had felt pressured by her superiors in the New York Public Library system, including Anne Carroll Moore and Frances Clarke Sayers, to make them part of the Collection. She also noted in a 1969 article that other books in the Collection still portrayed blacks in servile roles, but "If we had applied the criteria of today, where we now expect a full picture of Negro life, we wouldn't have had any books."[34] The Bannerman books were excluded from Charlemae Rollins' *We Build*

Together and from the first and subsequent editions of *Books about Negro Life for Children*, later compiled by Baker for the New York Public Library.

Publicly stated objections to *Little Black Sambo* began appearing in professional journals in the mid-1940's. As Charlemae Rollins, Augusta Baker, and others spoke out against objectionable themes, stereotyped illustrations, degrading names, and exaggerated dialect, these criteria became more accepted in judging books in which blacks appeared. The seemingly innocent children's story about Sambo and tigers came under more demanding scrutiny.

The Story of Little Black Sambo: Reilly and Britton, 1908.

Reilly and Britton Co., 1908

Illustrations

As Augusta Baker explained in 1971,

> The depiction of a black person is exceptionally important in books for children. An artist can portray a black child—black skin, natural hair and flat features—and make him a stereotype and a caricature. The black child who sees the picture which ridicules his race may be deeply hurt, feel defeated, or become resentful and rebellious. The white child who sees the stereotyped presentation of the black person begins to feel superior and to accept this distorted picture or "type."[35]

The variety of illustrations in the multiple versions of *Little Black Sambo* produced in the U.S. during the 1920's, 30's, and 40's (see Appendix E) successfully served to confuse the locale of the story and the nationality of Sambo and his parents. Although it is never specifically stated in Bannerman's original version, the story seems to be set in India. Many illustrators changed the setting to Africa or the U.S; in spite of the prominence in the story of tigers, which are native only to Asia. As already noted, the title appeared on the Tennessee State Department's *The Negro; a Selected List for School Libraries of Books by or about the Negro in Africa and America*. The author of a paper for a Columbia University School of Library Service course noted in 1937, "All African material, including 'Little Black Sambo,' has been omitted."[36] Given the diversity of editions on the market at the time, the confusion is not difficult to understand.

Of the variant versions published before 1948 that were available for examination, most seem to be set in a stylized Africa or the U.S. south. Reilly & Britton's "Children's Red Books" series included *The Story of Little Black Sambo* in 1908 with pictures by John R. Neill. The illustrations were adapted from the original Bannerman edition, but with grossly exaggerated lips, eyes, and hair. Mumbo is a fat, barefoot "Aunt Jemima" with polka-dot bandana. The 1917 Cupples & Leon edition of Sambo, illustrated by John B. Gruelle, showed "black-face" minstrel-type characters, with exaggerated lips and eyes, and another "Aunt Jemima" Mumbo flipping flapjacks on a brick stove.

Eulalie's highly romanticized illustrations for the 1925 through 1955 Platt & Munk editions also seem to show an African American family, and although these characters are more attractive, "Aunt Jemima" is there again, so large that her dress barely buttons over her large bosom. Altemus' (later Platt & Munk) series of Little Black Sambo stories, written and illustrated by Frank Ver Beck, are an exception. Ver Beck's *Little Black Sambo and the Baby Elephant* (1925), . . . *and the Tiger Kitten* (1926), . . . *and the Monkey People* (1928), . . . *in the Bears' Den* (1930), and . . . *and the Crocodiles* (1930) show Sambo in a highly decorative Indian locale. Rand McNally's 1927 Sambo is little more than a coal black silhouette. In the pancake scene the facial expressions are stereotyped.

Fern Bisel Peat made stuffed dolls of the Sambo characters for Saalfield's "Calico Classics" series in 1932. Sambo is adorned with beribboned braids, Jumbo has a snowy balding head à la "Uncle Tom," and Mumbo is again a beaming "Aunt Jemima." Nina R. Jordan's illustrations for Whitman in 1934 have a bald, ear-ringed Sambo under a coconut palm, with a young, virile Jumbo and the ever-smiling "Aunt Jemima" Mumbo (slimmer here) in the pancake scene. C. Carey Cloud's "pop-up" Sambo (Blue Ribbon Press, 1934) is a curly-haired silhouette with exaggerated lips and a grassy fringe for underwear.

Robert Moore's pictures for the 1942 Grosset & Dunlap version show the influence of the original Bannerman illustrations in the clothing of his characters, but the cooking stove is his own invention. In a combination book (including "Little Black Sambo," "The Little Red Hen," and "Peter Rabbit") for Whitman in 1944, Hilda Miloche's and Wilma Kane's characters are again stereotypical. Julian Wehr's animations for Dutton's 1948 version emphasize glossy black skin and large rolling eyes, with a thatched "jungle hut" in the background.

Perhaps because of escalating feeling against *Sambo*, later variations have markedly returned to an Indian locale with more appropriate vegetation, dress, and home furnishings, such as the versions by Gustaf Tenggren for Simon & Schuster's "Little Golden Library" series (1948), the unnamed illustrator for RCA Victor's "talking book" version (1949), Suzanne for Whitman (1950), and Gladys Turley Micheli for Whitman's "Tell-a-Tale Books" series (1953).

There are several theories about the inspiration for Helen Bannerman's original illustration, some more likely than others. One receiving popular credence among librarians is that Bannerman modeled them on minstrel-show characters. The "black-face" style of performing, which had begun in the U.S. in 1830, had become the rage of the British Isles in the 1860's and 70's, continuing in popularity until after the turn of the century. Minstrel performers appeared before Queen Victoria and were considered innocent family entertainment.

As noted later, "Sambo" was a common name in minstrel shows, and although most performers were adult, an occasional child was used. Writing in 1928, an authority on English "minstrelsy" commented on G.H. Elliott, a black English performer in a profession where "fake niggers" were preferred:

> [He was] . . . undoubtedly the greatest exponent of coon song and dance in this country now before the public . . . Elliott, although born in this country, spent much of his early life in America. When a boy he became a member of one of the largest and most important minstrel organizations in America—Primrose and West's Minstrels; when, attired as a little piccaninny, he would be discovered reclining on a tiger skin at the feet of the interlocutor.[37]

Could this image of a black child with a tiger skin have found its way to

Bannerman? Perhaps, but Elizabeth Smith, the Bannerman biographer, feels that the strict religious influence in Helen Bannerman's life would have prevented her contact with the minstrel stage.

Bannerman's original Sambo is clothed similarly to minstrel costumes.

Another theory is that Bannerman conceived her characters as actual Africans, or a poorly defined Afro/Indian mixture, from memories of her youth. In proposing this opinion, Selma Lanes points out that Helen Bannerman may have had in mind images of non-Indian blacks:

> Why Mrs. Bannerman, sketching from memory, should depict black people as she did may well be explained by the fact that she herself had memories of a different black population. As the daughter of a clergyman who was also an Army chaplain, she had spent the impressionable years of her childhood in various parts of the British Empire. Between the ages of two and ten she lived on Madeira, off the west coast of Africa, where black Africans were a sizable element in a mixed population . . . There is little doubt that Mrs. Bannerman drew her characters as she did not out of malice but because she was a conventional product of her era. A proper English gentlewoman of the '90s, she no doubt saw one dark-skinned non-Englishman as looking much like another. Indians and African blacks were readily and innocently confused in her mind.[38]

Perhaps, but Portuguese Madeira is not as near to the African coast as is implied, and there is no evidence to suggest that Helen Bannerman lived in

any other non-European part of the world until she went to India with her husband.

Finally, there is the unpublished theory that Bannerman crudely but fairly accurately depicted the 19th century British image of the features and dress of the peoples with whom she was familiar in India. Anna Pellowski, formerly of the New York Public Library and presently director of the Information Center on Children's Cultures (U.S. Committee for UNICEF), suggested this theory. She explained that some anthropologists believe there is evidence that ancestors of the southern Indians once intermingled with Africans who had traveled across the Indian Ocean from the west, producing Indians with darker skin and curly hair.[39] Coincidently, the title appeared in a bibliography of selected books prepared by an Indian librarian for UNESCO as a basic buying list of children's books to be included in Asian school and public libraries.[40]

Selma Lanes may have inadvertently found the true inspiration for Bannerman's Sambo when she recently discovered a remarkable similarity between the proudly parading Indian child and the "wooly-headed black-a-moor" in "The Story of the Inky Boys" in Heinrich Hoffmann's moralistic but popular picture book, *Der Struwwelpeter*, first published in Germany in 1846. In this rhyming story, an unfortunate "black-a-moor" who goes for a walk with his green umbrella is teased unmercifully about his color by three young ruffians. Sympathetic Saint Nicholas intervenes. When his admonitions are ignored, he angrily douses the boys in an inkstand until they become as "black as crows."[41] *Struwwelpeter* was translated into English by 1848, and one of the British publishers was Blackie & Son, with offices in London, Glasgow and Bombay. It is quite likely that such a highly-regarded moralistic book was available in young Helen's sternly religious home and that the impression was a lasting one. Although Hoffmann's "black-a-moor" wears only short pants, the pose of the two figures and the repetition of the green umbrella in *Little Black Sambo* seems like more than mere coincidence. In tone, also, many of Bannerman's stories resemble the violence and moralism of the *Struwwelpeter* assortment, especially *The Story of Little Kettlehead*.

Finally, as Arbuthnot points out, *Struwwelpeter* "marked the emergence in books of what can only be termed 'animated drawing,' the direct ancestor of the comic book of today."[42] Bannerman may have been influenced by Hoffmann in this way also, for certainly her illustrations have a lively, active, animated quality. The proportion of pictures to text is very high when compared with other books of the period, and some, such as *Pat and the Spider*, have almost a flip-book quality.

Whatever the inspiration and forces working upon Bannerman as *The Story of Little Black Sambo* formed in her mind during that railway journey in India, her illustrations and those of the numerous other artists who depicted Sambo and his parents became the subject of increasing

controversy. Depending upon the version of *Little Black Sambo* seen by children, it is not difficult to understand the impact of the illustrations on the feelings and attitudes of any child. Stereotypes and caricatures abounded in the various editions of *Sambo*, especially in those produced before the 1950's. Even when the Indian origins of the book were used as a defense, there was criticism. Writing in 1970, the head of special collections at Fisk University states:

> Undoubtedly, a dark and backward step in publishing history with regard to Negro children was taken in 1900 when Helen Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* was first published. Even though some defending white librarians may contest this by saying that the book was actually about a little *Indian* boy, the ludicrous illustrations of thick red lips, and kaleidoscopic clashing colors of red coat, blue pants, purple shoes with "crimson soles and crimson linings," overtopped with a green umbrella, and replete with the name of Sambo, marked the model stereotyped caricature of Negroes to white children for generations. The devastating effect of this story has without question cast a long ugly shadow on the developing minds of white children by giving them a model caricature that demeans and ridicules black children.[43]

Struwwelpeter's "Black-a-Moor" and Bannerman's Sambo: both with green umbrella.

NAMES

Many teachers and librarians erroneously assumed that it was only the adjective "black" which was offensive in the name of "Little Black Sambo," as did May Hill Arbuthnot in the second and third editions of *Children and Books*:

> In this age of color and race consciousness, some people wish that Mrs. Bannerman had not woven the word *black* into her repetitive cadence of colors. Indeed its use, together with the stylized pictures, has brought about the exclusion of the book from most reading lists. If *black* applied to people is a cause of grief to some of our children, then the book should be omitted from school lists.[44]

Although at one time "black" had been used as a taunting word, the major concern of those who protested against "Little Black Sambo" was the name "Sambo" itself and what it had come to represent to black people in the U.S. There was nothing innocent and appealing in the name's connotations:

> This seems to be the classic example of the harm that can be done by books in poor taste. The characters are harmless enough and so is the little fantasy; but the bad carry-over is the tagging every Negro Sambo or Black Sambo. This is as repulsive as Dago, Heinie, Wop as stigmatizing names for other groups.[45]

A comparative examination of British and U.S. dictionaries published during the last century reveals a long etymological history for the name of "Sambo." Its derivation seems to have two possible branches. The most commonly cited in dictionaries is from the Spanish word *zambo*, meaning "bow-legged," which in turn is believed to be derived from the Late Latin *scambus* and the Greek *skambos*, meaning "crooked." The Portuguese word for "bow-legged," *zambro*, is similar.

Some dictionaries offer a second theory—that of a possible West African derivation. The English merchant and sea captain John Hawkins, who initiated the British into the profitable slave trade with the Spanish settlements in the West Indies, made voyages to the West African coast to enslave African people in 1562, 1564, and 1567. In the narrative of the 1564 trip, "a West African tribe called the *Samboses* is mentioned repeatedly . . . and *Sambo* would be a natural back-formation from this."[46] At the height of the slave trade, the West African Fulani peoples had spread east from Senegal and Guinea and reached Nigeria and Cameroon. It is highly likely that the Moslem Fulanis followed the custom of disposing of many of the conquered peoples in their religious wars of expansion by selling them into slavery. The Senegalese Foulah (Fulani) language has a word, *sambo*, meaning "uncle." Apparently there is also a word *sambo* in the Hausa language of northern Nigeria (dominated by the Fulani in the early 1800's) which is used for the second son of a family. Although from a different part of Africa, the Kongo word *nzambu*, meaning "monkey," is also cited as a possible source by some dictionaries.

In any case, "Sambo" was apparently used in the Americas first by the Spanish as a name for individual slaves and as a generic term for the mixed children of black and Indian parents in the West Indies. In racially-conscious Southern society, it later came to mean the child of a black person and a "mulatto," denoting one-quarter white ancestry, as "quadroon" was used for those who were "three-quarters white." Its first documented use in the U.S. seems to have been in 1704 in the *Boston News-Letter* concerning the capture of a runaway slave named Sambo.[47] In 1745 an advertisement appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* for the return of three escaped slaves, one of whom was named Sambo.[48]

"Sambo" was commonly found in the entertainment field. One of the earliest recorded appearances of a black performer on the U.S. stage was in a role with that name:

> In 1795, moreover, a genuine American Negro appeared on the stage of Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theatre in Murdock's *Triumphs of Love*, playing the part of Sambo.[49]

The name was present during the beginning years of "Negro minstrelsy" when, "In October, 1837, a certain J. Henry was at the American Museum, exhibiting 'the Ethiopian Comic Statues,' or 'Sambo on the Pedestal.' "[50] Perhaps "Sambo" even became interchangeable with "Tambo" in the "black-face" minstrel routines. (In the formal "line-up" routines, with the Interlocutor in the center, the endmen were called "Mr. Tambo," because he used a tambourine, and "Mr. Bones," who played bone castanets. (Jessie Birtha, a black children's book selection specialist for the Free Library of Philadelphia, stated in an article, "Remember the end man in the minstrel show, the stupid one who was the butt of all the jokes, was Sambo." She also noted, "The ventriloquist's little black, red-lipped dummy was named Sambo."[51]

By the mid-1800's, the term was employed to refer to any black person, often with derision and contempt, and was used through the mid-twentieth century as a "nickname" to call porters, shoe-shiners, etc.

The source for Helen Bannerman's use of the name "Sambo" is more difficult to trace than U.S. usage. Athough the term is used in British dictionaries from as early as 1921 to mean a "mulatto" or "half-breed," and it is defined in the 1971 *Oxford English Dictionary* as "applied in America and Asia to persons of various degrees of mixed negro and Indian and European blood,"[52] "Sambo" is *not* included in the earlier Charles Richardson's *A New Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1836), nor in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1870; no other bibliographic data available). If it were common usage in India at the time *Little Black Sambo* was written, it is peculiar that the word is not included in Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell's bulky *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (London: John Murray, 1903).

Bannerman biographer Elizabeth Smith feels that the choice of names must relate to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which there are characters named "Black Sam," "little black Jake," and "Sambo." Although Sam and Jake are minor to the plot and are not fully described, Sambo is one of the two principal slaves (the other is Quimbo) on the Simon Legree plantation, hated by the other slaves for their brutal cruelty. Although the names may have persisted in Bannerman's mind, the personalities of the Stowe characters seem unlikely as inspiration for *Little Black Sambo*.

The development of the use of "Mumbo" and "Jumbo" is also difficult to trace. Jumbo had long been a circus term, and in 1847, a minstrel role called "Jumbo Jim" was performed.[53] The theory of early African influence on Bannerman's later depiction of her characters gains some credibility by the choice of these names.

> And the characters' names—Black Mumbo and Black Jumbo—which bring to mind the phrase "mumbo-jumbo" (a synonym for gibberish in English), again are more African and Indian in origin, a *mumbo jumbo* being the tribal medicine man of central Africa who protected his people from evil.[54]

While the three names may not be as obviously offensive as are "nigger," "coon," "spook," etc., it is not difficult to see their negative connotations. Black children who were taunted with the name of Sambo on the playground were embarrassed and angry when the story was read. Such a painful experience was recalled by a black social worker in a letter to the Council on Interracial Books for Children and in a telephone conversation with this author:

> Your articles on Little Black Sambo made me recall for the first time in years the very painful experience of hearing that story read by a teacher in my school. I was the only Black child in the school system at the time [1946 or '47] (Westport, Connecticut). I remember how some of my classmates would refer to me as Black Sambo after hearing the story (they were too sophisticated to say nigger) and how for the first time I didn't want to go to school ever! To this day I hate that teacher and the principal who told my mother it was harmless. The only good thing it did was put me on guard for my remaining years in public school. No, the book can only be used as an example of how to destroy a child.[55]

Similarly, an Omaha, Nebraska, barber gave graphic testimony to the Kerner Commission's investigation into rioting and unrest among the nation's black population in the late 1960's. Among other remarks, he said:

> I sat through *Little Black Sambo*. And since I was the only black face in the room, I became Little Black Sambo. If my parents had taught me bad names to call the little cracker kids—and I use that term on purpose to try to get a message across to you—you don't like it. Well, how do you think we feel when an adult is going to take our child (we teach our child to respect that adult) and that adult gives these little white kids bad names to call him? Why don't you have Little

> Cracker Bohunk? Little Cracker Dago? Little Cracker Kike? You can't stand that. But yet you're going to take our little black children and expose them to this kind of ridicule, then not understand why we don't like it.[56]

Gradually, some white parents, teachers, and librarians began to realize the negative potential of the seemingly innocent *Little Black Sambo*, although as late as 1969 a black children's book specialist felt the need to again remind librarians about the name's damaging aspects:

> The argument has been offered, children don't know or care about the background of a name. They only listen to the story. But it has been proved—and experienced—that if a story of this type is used in an integrated story hour or classroom, there is a certain amount of discomfort and even, yet, inferiority feeling—for a black child when white classmates look at him and giggle, later teasing him by calling him Sambo. No matter how entertaining a book may be, one group of children should never be entertained at the expense of another group's feelings.[57]

THEME

Although to many critics, including Augusta Baker, the story of *Little Black Sambo* itself is the least offensive aspect of the book, key elements of the tale have also come under fire. Lanes speaks for many when she says:

> Beyond the names and drawings in *Little Black Sambo*, surely nothing suggests a white-supremacist attitude. There is neither dialect nor anything in the least demeaning in the behavior of any character. Sambo's quick wit in moments of dire stress would be the envy of many a diplomat today . . . He was black, the hero of a beautifully satisfying picture book, and, as such, justly loved in his time.[58]

There can be no argument about the lack of dialect. However, to Ethel Richard, a black school librarian in New Jersey and an advisor to Bro-Dart's *Elementary School Library Collection*, even though *Sambo* has all the elements of a good story, it is a tale which can create resentment among black children. She feels that whether or not Sambo is depicted in the illustrations as an Indian boy does not change the basic ridicule of the character and the inherent condescension of Bannerman shown by such details as the bare feet of her often well-dressed characters and the unsanitary use of butter taken from the ground. Similar criticism was expressed as early as 1947:

> There is also the question of Little Black Sambo's clothes—the blue trousers, the red coat, the green umbrella, and the purple shoes with crimson soles and crimson linings. It is certainly true that children love bright colors. Surely there can be no objection to this! But wait a minute. Isn't it also true that one of the main arguments of white chauvinists who wish to prove that Negroes are uncultured and tasteless is the untruth that they have an indiscriminate and primitive love for bright-colored clothes? . . . Certainly Little Black Sambo tends to establish the false idea very firmly in the child's mind.
>
> Finally, there is the ending of the story. How satisfactory it seems, when the tigers have been reduced to butter, to have Sambo and his parents sit down to a feast of pancakes. And what a magnificent number they eat . . . You may say that this exaggeration is just the sort of thing to delight and amuse a child. But is this particular exaggeration an accident? Doesn't it actually reinforce the white chauvinists' false contention that Negroes are people of inordinate appetites? It reminds one of the recent flood of newspaper stories exaggerating the amount Joe Louis eats.[59]

This latter criticism is reinforced when the Gustaf Tenggren illustrations in the popular Simon & Schuster Little Golden Library edition are examined. Although the locale is set in India and the stylized depiction of the characters is comparatively attractive, the final "pancake scene" in the 1948 publication (which was reprinted many times and translated into several foreign languages) appears to be derogatory.

1948 Golden Library version, set in India, retains stereotypes.

Representing various degrees of protest against these three aspects of the book—illustrations, names, and theme—specific requests to remove *Little Black Sambo* from school and public library shelves were made. The Trenton, New Jersey, Board of Education refused such a request from a NAACP delegation in 1949, claiming that at the time, *Sambo* was being used only as a reference book for students who requested it.[60] In 1956, the Toronto (Canada) Board of Education honored the request of a group of black parents by voting to withdraw it from the Toronto public schools. This action was taken in spite of opposition from the superintendent of schools and many leading libraries of the city, who felt that such a move was unwarranted censorship.[61] At the request of the Human Relations Council Education Committee, the superintendent of schools in Lincoln, Nebraska, ordered *Little Black Sambo* removed from school library shelves in 1964.[62] When Augusta Baker and George Woods, children's book editor for the *New York Times*, met with librarians and teachers at the University of Mississippi in 1965, a question of major concern was ". . .should Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Little Black Sambo be removed from library shelves?"[63] Often removal was not approved by the librarians involved, as was the case in New Rochelle, New York:

> Years ago, Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* . . . was the focus of much controversy because of its caricatured and stereotyped illustrations. New editions

were published with Sambo portrayed as a most attractive black boy; nevertheless, some of our librarians were confounded when our superintendent of schools issued a directive to discard all copies of the book from our libraries. After all, they said, it is a delightful story, the children enjoy it and the earlier, offensive illustrations have been replaced.[64]

In the mid-1960's, an important study by Nancy Larrick, former president of the International Reading Association, was instrumental in focusing the attention of the publishing industry and the public on the poor treatment or exclusion of blacks in books for children. Titled "The All-White World of Children's Books," and summarized in *Saturday Review* in 1965, the study reported that very few books were available which showed a positive image of black people. Among the books cited as objectionable were three editions of *Little Black Sambo* then on the market.[65] Prompted by the conditions cited in the study, Nancy Larrick and other noted authors, illustrators, educators, librarians, and members of the publishing industry, founded the Council on Interracial Books for Children to encourage the creation and distribution of non-racist books for children. The House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Adam Clayton Powell, became interested in the problem.

> Such complaints about the Negro's exclusion from books prompted five days of hearings in August and September 1966 by a special *ad hoc* subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor. Although most of the testimony was directed against inadequate school textbooks, the purpose of the hearings was to investigate "the treatment of minority groups in textbooks and school library books."[66]

An increasing number of articles were published on the subject of the depiction of blacks in literature during the 1960's, and gradually the public consciousness seemed to acknowledge the questionable nature of many books.

By the turn of the decade, the majority of published opinion in regard to *Little Black Sambo* appeared to be that it could no longer be defended as a suitable story for children, no matter how innocent had been its original intent. Many concerned teachers and librarians seemed to agree that,

> . . . the development of circumstances concerning the Sambo tradition has been unfortunate. The usefulness of *Little Black Sambo* is dead. The acceptability of *Little Black Sambo* is dead. . . .
>
> I am not saying that I advocate destroying all of the existing copies of such books. These books have been classics in children's literature and as such have value for adults in tracing the development of black children's literature. However, I feel that at this time [1969], their existence should be relegated to the historical collection in the children's library.[67]

And although Lanes felt that *Little Black Sambo* never deserved the intense negative criticism that it received, she concluded:

> Realities and fantasies shift, however, and those of the 1970's, for parents and children, have moved a great distance from Sambo's lush green jungles to ones much bleaker, more menacing and closer to home. As a period piece—a relic of days when tigers roamed free outside wild-animal refuges and mothers made pancakes from scratch—the work deserves to be preserved. As a fond memory of those of us over thirty and white, it is unlikely to be forgotten. For the rest, one picture book is not worth a thousand angry protests. Let *Sambo* be consigned to literary history.[68]

Others, perhaps more realistic about the staying power of white racism, greeted *Sambo's* apparent demise with a skepticism that proved to be accurate.

SAMBO TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Story of Little Black Sambo has existed in the U.S. for over three-quarters of a century. The title has been dropped from most professional lists of recommended books, and it may be difficult or impossible to obtain in many school and public libraries, except in special reference collections. It is not the first book to have been seriously criticized and subsequently removed from libraries, but because of its place as a "classic," beloved by generations of whites in the U.S., it has aroused perhaps the greatest emotional reactions.

Its removal has been used by special interest groups as an argument for their own purposes—one humorous example being the two officers of the International Conference of Police Associations who in 1971 met with the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee in Los Angeles to protest the depiction of policemen as pigs in William Steig's prize-winning book for children, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. One officer argued that "some librarians were quick to comply with requests to remove another children's book, *Little Black Sambo*, from their collections when blacks complained that its illustrations were degrading."[69] He obviously was not aware of the more than thirty years of inconclusive soul-searching in the library profession over Bannerman's story.

It would be completely erroneous to assume that *Little Black Sambo* no longer circulates in the U.S. J.B. Lippincott, which became publisher of the "authorized" Bannerman edition when it acquired Stokes in 1941, reports that sales of this small, virtually unchanged volume are still lively and showed little decline during the period of controversy. Since the book is usually purchased for preschoolers by parents or relatives, almost all sales are to book stores. Lippincott reports that 17,900 copies were sold in 1973 and 22,526 in 1974. Dorothy Briley, Lippincott children's book editor, stated that the company subscribes to the theory that racism is "in the eye of the beholder" and the book will be reprinted as long as the demand exists!

To combat criticism of the story's stereotypes, three publishers are making revisions. Platt & Munk is the long-time publisher of a mass-market *Little Black Sambo* version with romanticized illustrations by Eulalie. In 1972 the company copyrighted a slightly revised edition in which the location is stated as India. The names of Sambo's parents are changed to Mama Sari and Papa Simbu, and a sari-clad women is then substituted for the formerly buxom Mumbo in the kitchen scene. However, the illustrations of Sambo and Jumbo remain the same in both editions. Thus, a stereotyped black man (now Papa Simbu) and a black Sambo are rather incongruously depicted with Mama Sari (formerly Mumbo). A 1974 press run of 15,000 copies was soon exhausted by distribution to stores.

The multi-volume *My Book House*, published in Illinois by United Educators, has included the story since 1937 with changes from dark to light-skinned characters in an Indian setting. Although the original names

Platt and Munk's Black Mumbo is transposed to Mama Sari, thus magically shedding 50 pounds.

were used until the latest edition, the 1971 version features the same story and illustrations with three name substitutions—Rama Krishna (Sambo), Lakshmana (Mumbo), and Ishwaran (Jumbo).

Supermarket shoppers may buy a Peter Pan Company paperback book/record combination titled *Little Brave Sambo*, in which the story is set

in "the deep dark jungles of Africa," but Sambo is a white-skinned, red-haired chubby tot with blue eyes and Mumbo is a chic matron with her slim white figure wrapped in a leopard-skin sarong. Available for separate purchase, the 45rpm record is protected by a cardboard jacket showing a turbaned white child with a purple parasol riding on a lion.

When Black Mumbo became Mama Sari she lost about 50 pounds. When she turned white, a few additional changes took place. She looked like a "sexier" Dorothy Lamour. Sorry. The Council was not given permission to print the copyrighted illustrations. The sketch is our own approximation.

First editions of the various *Sambo* books are sought-after items in the antiquarian children's book trade. Justin Schiller is a Bannerman collector who recently acquired a Grant Richards first edition for the private library of noted illustrator Maurice Sendak.[70] The Schiller catalog and those of other dealers in old and rare children's books, including the Victoria Book Shop of New York and Jo Ann Reisler of Virginia, occasionally list copies of *Sambo* and other Bannerman titles, but they are quickly purchased by collectors almost as soon as the listings are available.

Attitudes in schools and libraries about *Little Black Sambo* are still decidedly mixed. A recent survey of eight major children's collections in large public libraries reveals that the book remains in circulation in Atlanta, Denver, and Los Angeles, while Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Scarsdale (New York) have relegated it to the reference section or have removed it completely. Comments by the librarians in charge range from defense of the book to condemnation.[71] An apparent about-face took place in Texas, where the Dallas school administration is reported to have reinstated *Sambo* to the approved list of books for school libraries in 1972 after dropping it in 1967.[72] In Lincoln, Nebraska, where the superintendent of schools ordered the book to be removed from school library shelves in 1964,[73] the University of Nebraska Press currently publishes an English curriculum guide series which is used extensively across the U.S., both in schools and in teacher-training institutions. Those

examining the first grade volume will find very favorable treatment of *Sambo* in the "fanciful tale" section, with detailed instructions for using the story in a classroom setting.[74] The University of Nebraska Press reports that over 16,000 copies of this guide have been sold in almost every state, especially Virginia, Maryland, Nebraska, and Utah.

In some areas of the country, attitudes toward *Sambo* seem to be untouched by the winds of change. The Winter-Spring 1971 *Interracial Books for Children* reported that a kindergarten class in Monroe Center, Illinois, presented "Little Black Sambo" in pantomime with recorded narration to a PTA meeting. No black people live in the area, and the teacher expressed surprise that there was any controversy over the story.[75] More recently, a school librarian from Columbus, Ohio, who was visiting the Library of Congress during the summer of 1974, was visibly pleased to learn that *Little Black Sambo* was still being published. She was not aware of any protest in her area, and she planned to buy two or three copies for her all-white school.[76] A specialized publisher in New Jersey whose books serve librarians apparently saw no need to add any comment on the controversy surrounding *Little Black Sambo* when it published Jean Kujoth's glowing annotation in her 1973 bibliography, *Best-Selling Children's Books*:

> The jolly and exciting tale of the little boy who lost his red coat and his blue trousers and his purple shoes but was saved from the tigers to eat 169 pancakes for his supper, has been universally loved by generations of children. First written in 1899, the story has become a childhood classic and the authorized American edition with the original drawings by the author has sold hundreds of thousands of copies.
>
> This is a book that speaks the common language of all nations, and has added more to the joy of little children than perhaps any other story. They love to hear it again and again; to read it to themselves; to act it out in their play.[77]

Although Kujoth states that her purpose is not to recommend books and that her survey attempts to objectively report on those trade books with sales of 100,000 or more copies since original publication, her description of *Little Black Sambo* is hardly without bias.

Little Black Sambo is also appearing in modern guises unrelated to schools and public libraries. The pattern for a two-headed "Black Sambo and the Tiger" reversible stuffed doll is available from a Missouri concern and was advertised in a nationally distributed Fall/Winter 1975 needlework magazine. The story was the basis for sexual interpretation in a paper presented by Dr. Marjorie McDonald of Cleveland to a recent convention of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry in New Orleans.[78] Travelers and residents in many parts of the country can eat in a Sambo's chain restaurant featuring hamburgers, steak, fried chicken, "Sambo cakes" (pancakes), and "tiger butter." Originated in Santa Barbara, California, in 1957, the restaurant's theme purportedly began as a combination of parts of the two owners' names. "Shortly thereafter the partners revived and revised the legend of the little boy and the tiger . . . for identification and promotional purposes."[79] Although the Sambo in the decor of the restaurants, menus, and free postcards is decidedly a light-complexioned Indian complete with

turban, an observer reported that the skin color has lightened perceptibly over the years since the first restaurants were opened. The Sambo story on the menu differs from the Bannerman original in that Sambo feeds the tigers pancakes to regain his clothing. This culinary adaptation is probably enough to keep Sambo's memory alive in the U.S. for at least another generation, with neither help nor hindrance from librarians and booksellers.

Protest against *Little Black Sambo* outside of the U.S. has been relatively recent. In England, prompted perhaps by the reissue in 1971 of seven Bannerman books in a boxed set by the British publishers, Chatto & Windus, the controversy raged for a while in the letters column of the London *Times*. The London organization TAR (Teachers Against Racism) attempted to raise the public consciousness about these and other racist books. Their criticisms have had some positive results.

What is the future for *Little Black Sambo*? Its place in the history of children's literature as an innovative book in terms of format and style seems assured. Hopefully, research collections of children's books will endeavor to provide copies of the many variant editions for scholars, since they are such excellent examples of mass-marketed materials which significantly reflected white American interests and attitudes (in this case, toward blacks). As long as there are consumers creating a demand for the story in its various print and non-print forms, it will continue to be published. However, anyone involved with children should know the history of the story and the reasons for its offensiveness to African Americans and all Americans concerned with the elimination of racism.

The book's still-unsettled status in schools and libraries must be resolved. Students in schools of education and library science can only be confused by such ambivalence as appears in the latest edition of *Children and Books*:

> Some of the controversial books of the past can be seen, in retrospect, to have been breakers of barriers, and small classics of their time. Sometimes it is the content, sometimes the treatment, sometimes only a small facet of the story that causes disagreement about a book. The discussion here of fanciful books that have aroused controversy is meant not to disparage them but to point to some of the areas of fantasy writing that trouble many adults.
>
> . . . Another book that has been condemned by some adults is Helen Bannerman's *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, which is set in India. It is offensive to many adults because of the illustrations and because the name "Sambo" has derogatory connotations. Some adults defend the book on the grounds that the nonsense humor and the exaggeration make it a fine tale for telling or reading aloud, and that the character was not intended to demean black people.[80]

While space limitations may have dictated the brevity of comment, such oversimplification of the arguments for and against the story will not assist the new teacher or librarian who is confronted with impressionable children. Whatever the author's intentions may have been, it is the demeaning results which are important. Educators and librarians can not ignore the existence of *Little Black Sambo*. Hopefully, consideration based on fact, historical perspective and desire for a pluralistic society can lead to fruitful discussion and constructive decisions.

AFTERWORD

Helen Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* has been a bone of contention in the relationships of one librarian with another for a long time. To some it is a destructively offensive book. To others it is a literary "classic." Despite this disparity, libraries would not be affected if the book had been written for adults who have free access to every type of controversial reading matter. But a child, by the sheer fact of always being under the tutelage of others, is either aided or handicapped in the attempt to form a positive self-image. A book that impedes this process is of legitimate concern for all in our society.

Racism is a malady which has long been verified by psychologists and sociologists as a destructive force in the lives of children. Rather than a mere political opinion, racism is labeled a sickness because it distorts both the victim and those feeling superior to the victim. A Black child's self-image is severely affected when characters in a book—the very ones the child should be able to identify with—are degraded. A white child's sense of reality is severely affected when he or she is encouraged, by a book, to feel superior to a people from a different racial group.

Jessie Birtha, of the Philadelphia Free Library, has urged us to consider two questions when we select books. The first is, "How would I feel upon reading this book if I were a Black child?" Many librarians are not equipped to answer that question.

Those of us who are white are not equipped because we haven't experienced the hurtful socialization which would enable us to readily perceive all of the racist insults found in some books. Life, of course, has given a more heightened awareness to those who have been at the butt end of racism. For this reason it is especially necessary for white librarians and teachers to search their personal backgrounds for indifference or inexperience in this matter and then to make a determined effort to correct some of the harm done by racist books.

Of course it is not easy to say, "Place this book on a restricted shelf." Dr. Paul A. Miller, Omaha's Superintendent of Schools in 1964, voiced the librarian's greatest anxiety about censorship when he said: "If you start here (withdrawing *Little Black Sambo*), where do you stop?" What do children's librarians reply to community groups when they insist that certain books are too anti-American, sacrilegious, or immoral for child readers? How would we answer other groups when they insist that *no* individual or group should be allowed censorship rights?

Attempting to judge a child's books as to its moral or patriotic qualities involves a difference of opinion, of taste, of political and social theory. These are matters which call for discussion, criticism, and the encouragement of children's books with unorthodox points of view to balance the preponderance of "establishment" materials.

But how can *Little Black Sambo* be "balanced" by another book? Can we imagine circulating a child's picture book which caricatured and insultingly stereotyped Italians or Irish or Jews? In recent years such books would never have passed through the screening process of white editors, publishers, reviewers and librarians. The pain and outrage such books would cause to white children would be more clearly understood by that same informal screening panel. Then why do we continue to ignore evidence of the pain caused to Black children by *Little Black Sambo*?

Ernest W. Chambers, who testified before the 1968 Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders, remembers his experience with the book: "I wasn't born from the womb with the attitudes I have now. . . . I sat through *Little Black Sambo*. And since I was the *only Black face in the room, I became Little Black Sambo.*"

Jessie Birtha's second question to be answered before selecting a book relates to aesthetic criteria: "If I were to borrow this book from the library, would I return to get another book like it?" Applying this standard, *Little Black Sambo* enjoyed a glowing reputation for a long time. But we should ask: To what degree is the book realy distinguished for its rhythm, whimsy, imagination, humor, and compactness of form? Is it the professional duty or social obligation of a children's librarian to champion these elements *irrespective of other content*? Can literary elements counterbalance for a child the shock of self-rejection? The qualities of rhythm, imaginative invention, and so on, exist in so many forms and contexts that a child's early years are hardly sufficient to contain all the entertaining literary possibilities.

The history of *Little Black Sambo* negates its otherwise useful features. When children can be offered the joint pleasure of artistic form and humane content, why should we give them less?

Donnarae MacCann, formerly children's librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library and head librarian at the University Elementary School Library at U.C.L.A., is co-author (with Gloria Woodward) of *The Black American in Books for Children*, Scarecrow Press, 1972, and (with Olga Richard) of *The Child's First Book*, H.W. Wilson, 1973, and of "Illustrations in Children's Books" in *The Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature*, 4th edition, Scott, Foresman, 1976.

FOOTNOTES

1. Smith's biography of Bannerman will be published in 1977 by Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University. Selected interviews were broadcast on BBC radio on April 6, 1971, in a program produced by Smith—"Far Away Far Away Over the Sea."

2. The history of this early British publication has been reported by the antiquarian Justin Schiller in his article, "The Story of Little Black Sambo," printed in the Autumn 1974 issue of the British journal, *The Book Collector*.

3. Gertrude Arnold, *Mother's List of Books for Children*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: McClurg, 1912), p. ix.

4. "A Minimum Graded Book List for Elementary Classroom Libraries." Compiled at The Johns Hopkins University, February, 1927. Published by the Enoch Pratt Library, Baltimore, Maryland, n.d.

5. Nora E. Buest, *500 Books for Children*, U.S. Dept. of Interior Bulletin 1939, No. 11 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940).

6. Frances Clark Sayers, "Through These Sweet Fields," *Horn Book* XVIII (November 1942)

7. Edith Rees, "Books of 1936 for Younger Boys and Girls," *Library Journal* LXI (November 1, 1936).

8. May Lamberton Becker, *Books* (September 20, 1936).

9. May Lamberton Becker, *Books* (October 25, 1936).

10. Anne Carroll Moore, "The Three Owls' Notebook," *Horn Book* XII (November 1936).

11. "The Booklist," *Horn Book* XII (November 1936).

12. Anne Eaton, "New Books for Boys and Girls," *New York Times* (October 4, 1936).

13. Charlotte S. Huck and Doris Young Kuhn, *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968) p.77.

14. May Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1964) p. 336.

15. Justin Schiller, "The Story of Little Black Sambo," p. 381-82.

16. Phyllis McGinley, "Books for Children: Frankly Sentimental," *Harper's* CCI (December 1950).

17. Helen Bannerman, *The Story of Little Black Quasha* (New York: Stokes, 1908) p. 102.

18. Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole* (New York: Atheneum, 1971) p. 161-62.

19. Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones: a History of the American Minstrel Stage* (copyright, Duke University Press, 1930; reprinted, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968) p. 58.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 39-40.

21. "Jolson, Al," *The American Peoples Encyclopedia*, 1951, XI, p.699.

22. Harry A. Ploski and Ernest Kaiser, comp. and ed., *The Negro Almanac* (New York: Bellwether, 1971) p. 822.

23. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole*, p. 162.

24. Augusta Baker, "Guide

24. Augusta Baker, "Guidelines for Black Books. An Open Letter to Juvenile Editors," *Publishers Weekly* (August 14, 1969).

25. Charlemae Rollins, *We Build Together: a Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use* (Chicago: NOTE, 1941) p. 288.

26. Augusta Baker, "Reading for Democracy," *Wilson Library Bulletin* (October 1943).

27. Eleanor Weakley Nolen, "The Colored Child in Contemporary Literature," *Horn Book* XVIII (September 1942).

28. This subject heading (or a comparable one) was not used in *Library Literature* until 1958. For recent summaries of the history of growing awareness and protest against the treatment of blacks in children's books, see Carol A. Parks' "Goodbye Black Sambo," *Ebony* (November 1972) and Augusta Baker's "The Changing Image of the Black in Children's Literature," *Horn Book* (February 1975).

29. *The Negro: a Selected List for School Libraries of Books by or about the Negro in Africa and America*, compiled by the Division of School Libraries (Nashville, Tennessee: State Dept. of Education, 1941).

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. Augusta Baker, "Reading for Democracy."

33. *Ibid.*

34. Augusta Baker, "Guidelines for Black Books: An Open Letter to Juvenile Editors," p. 132.

35. Augusta Baker, ed., *The Black Experience in Children's Books* (New York Public Library, 1971) p.ii.

36. Harriet E. Baltimore, "The Illustration of the American Negro in Children's Books," prepared for L.S. 281, Columbia University School of Library Service, January 23, 1937, unp. (Quotation appears on last page.)

37. Harry Reynolds, *Minstrel Memories: The Story of Burnt Cork Minstrelsy in Great Britain from 1836 to 1927* (London: Alston Rivers, 1928).

38. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit hole*, p. 159, 160.

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40. Shakuntala Bhatawdekar, *Books for Asian Children; a Selective List of Publications from World Literature Suitable for Use in Asia, in the Original, in Translation or in Adaption* (Paris: UNESCO, 14 September 1956).

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50. George C.D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York, 1927), Vol. IV, p. 256.

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52. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), Vol. IX, p. 73.

53. Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones*, p. 32.

54. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole*, p. 160.

55. Marjorie B. Hammock, A.C.S.W.

56. *Ebony*, April, 1968, p.29.

57. Jessie J. Birtha, "Portrayal of the Black in Children's Literature," p. 190.

58. Selma J. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole*, p. 160, 163.

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66. A. Grace Mims, "Nervous Nellies on Race Relations?" *Library Journal* XCII (March 15, 1967).

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Appendix A
THE STORY OF LITTLE BLACK SAMBO

Written by Helen Bannerman

Once upon a time there was a little black boy, and his name was Little Black Sambo.

And his Mother was called Black Mumbo.

And his Father was called Black Jumbo.

And Black Mumbo made him a beautiful little Red Coat, and a pair of beautiful little Blue Trousers.

And Black Jumbo went to the Bazaar, and bought him a beautiful Green Umbrella, and a lovely little Pair of Purple Shoes with Crimson Soles and Crimson Linings. And then wasn't Little Black Sambo grand?

So he put on all his Fine Clothes, and went out for a walk in the Jungle. And by and by he met a Tiger. And the Tiger said to him, "Little Black Sambo, I'm going to eat you up!" And Little Black Sambo said, "Oh! Please Mr. Tiger, don't eat me up, and I'll give you my beautiful little Red Coat." So the Tiger said, "Very well, I won't eat you this time, but you must give me your beautiful little Red Coat." So the Tiger got poor Little Black Sambo's beautiful little Red Coat, and went away saying, "Now I'm the grandest Tiger in the Jungle."

And Little Black Sambo went on, and by and by he met another Tiger, and it said to him, "Little Black Sambo, I'm going to eat you up!" And Little Black Sambo said, "Oh! Please Mr. Tiger, don't eat me up, and I'll give you my beautiful little Blue Trousers." So the Tiger said, "Very well, I won't eat you this time, but you must give me your beautiful little Blue Trousers." So the Tiger got poor Little Black Sambo's beautiful little Blue Trousers, and went away saying, "Now *I'm* the grandest Tiger in the Jungle."

And Little Black Sambo went on and by and by he met another Tiger, and it said to him, "Little Black Sambo, I'm going to eat you up!" And Little Black Sambo said, "Oh! Please Mr. Tiger, don't eat me up, and I'll give you my beautiful little Purple Shoes with Crimson Soles and Crimson Linings."

But the Tiger said, "What use would your shoes be to me? I've got four feet, and you've got only two: you haven't enough shoes for me."

But Little Black Sambo said, "You could wear them on your ears."

"So I could," said the Tiger: "that's a very good idea. Give them to me, and I won't eat you this time."

So the Tiger got poor Little Black Sambo's beautiful little Purple Shoes with Crimson Soles and Crimson Linings, and went away saying, "Now *I'm* the grandest Tiger in the Jungle."

And by and by Little Black Sambo met another Tiger, and it said to him, "Little Black Sambo, I'm going to eat you up!" And Little Black Sambo said, "Oh! Please Mr. Tiger, don't eat me up and I'll give you my beautiful Green Umbrella." But the Tiger said, "How can I carry an umbrella, when I need all my paws for walking with?"

"You could tie a knot in your tail and carry it that way," said Little Black Sambo. "So I could," said the Tiger. "Give it to me, and I won't eat you this time," So he got poor Little Black Sambo's beautiful Green Umbrella, and went away saying, "Now *I'm* the grandest Tiger in the Jungle."

And poor Little Black Sambo went away crying, because the cruel Tigers had taken all his fine clothes.

Presently he heard a horrible noise that sounded like "Gr-r-r-r-rrrrrrr," and it got louder and louder. "Oh! dear!" said Little Black Sambo, "there are all the Tigers coming back to eat me up! What shall I do?" So he ran quickly to a palm-tree, and peeped round it to see what the matter was.

And there he saw all the Tigers fighting, and disputing which of them was the grandest. And at last they all got so angry that they jumped up and took off all the fine clothes, and began to tear each other with their claws, and bite each other with their great big white teeth.

And they came, rolling and tumbling right to the foot of the very tree where Little Black Sambo was hiding, but he jumped quickly in behind the umbrella. And the Tigers all caught hold of each other's tails, as they wrangled and scrambled, and so they found themselves in a ring round the tree.

Then, when the Tigers were very wee and very far away, Little Black Sambo jumped up, and called out, "Oh! Tigers! why have you taken off all your nice clothes? Don't you want them any more?" But the Tigers only answered, "Gr-r-r-r-rrrrrrr!"

Then Little Black Sambo said, "If you want them, say so, or I'll take them away." But the Tigers would not let go of each other's tails, and so they could only say, "Gr-r-r-r-rrrrrrr!"

So Little Black Sambo put on all his fine clothes again and walked off.

And the Tigers were very, very angry, but still they would not let go of each other's tails. And they were so angry, that they ran round the tree, trying to eat each other up, and they ran faster and faster, till they were whirling round so fast that you couldn't see their legs at all.

And they still ran faster and faster and faster, till they all just melted away, and there was nothing left but a great big pool of melted butter (or "ghi," as it is called in India,) round the foot of the tree.

Now Black Jumbo was just coming home from his work, with a great big brass pot in his arms, and when he saw what was left of all the Tigers he said, "Oh! what lovely melted butter! I'll take that home to Black Mumbo for her to cook with."

So he put it all into the great brass pot, and took it home to Black Mumbo to cook with.

When Black Mumbo saw the melted butter, wasn't she pleased! "Now," said she, "We'll all have pancakes for supper!"

So she got flour and eggs and milk and sugar and butter, and she made a huge big plate of the most lovely pancakes. And she fried them in the melted butter which the Tigers had made, and they were just as yellow and brown as little Tigers.

And then they all sat down to supper. And Black Mumbo ate Twenty-seven pancakes, and Black Jumbo ate Fifty-five, but Little Black Sambo ate a Hundred and Sixty-nine, because he was so hungry.

**Quoted directly from *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, by Helen Bannerman (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, n.d.)

Appendix B
PUBLISHING HISTORY OF *LITTLE BLACK SAMBO* IN THE UNITED STATES

Only first editions are listed. Copyright renewals and reprints are not included.

1900	Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York. Illus. by Helen Bannerman.
1905	Reilly & Britton, Chicago. (Christmas Stocking Series) —With Peter Rabbit and Uncle Tom's Cabin. Introduction by L. Frank Baum.
1908	Reilly & Britton, Chicago. (The Children's Red Books Series) —With the Story of Topsy from Uncle Tom's Cabin. Illus. by John R. Neill.
1910	Reilly & Britton, Chicago. (Turnover Book Series) —With the Story of Peter Rabbit.
1917	Cupples & Leon Co., New York. (All About Series) Illus. by John B. Gruelle. Title: All About Little Black Sambo.
Before 1920	M.A. Donohue & Co., Chicago. (Peter Rabbit Series)
1925	A. Whitman & Co., Chicago. (The "Just Right" Edition) Illus. by Cobb X. Shinn.
1925	Platt & Munk, New York. Illus. by Eulalie.
1926	Whitman, Racine, Wisconsin. Illus. by Clara Bell Thurston and Ernest Vetsch.
Before 1929	Macmillan, New York. (A Happy Hour Book) Illus. by Frank Dobias. Title: The Black Sambo.
1930	Henry Altemus, Philadelphia. Title: Little Black Sambo Book. (Included *LBS* by Helen Bannerman and other Sambo stories by Frank Ver Beck.) Illus. by Helen Bannerman and Frank Ver Beck.
1930	John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia. (Cheerie Series) Illus. by Eunice Stephenson.
1931	Harter Publishing Co., Cleveland. Illus. by Fern Bisel Peat.
1931	Altemus, Philadelphia. Introduction by George C. Harvey. Reprinted by David McKay Co., Philadelphia.
1932	Saalfield Publishing Co., Cleveland. (Calico Classics) Illus. by Fern Bisel Peat.

Also by this publisher, no date.
Illus. by Florence White Williams.

1933 Garden City Publishing Co., Garden City, New York.
Illus. by Kurt Wiese.
Animations by A.V. Warren.

1934 Whitman, Racine, Wisconsin.
—Including "A New Story of Little Black Sambo."
Illus. by Nina R. Jordan.

1934 Blue Ribbon Press, New York. ("Pop-up" Edition)
Illus. by C. Carey Cloud. (Midget Pop-up Books)

1934 Rand McNally, Chicago.
—Including, The Gingerbread Man, and Titty Mouse and Tatty Mouse. From *The Real Story Book*, 1927.
Illus. by Margaret Evans Price.

1935 Whitman, Racine, Wisconsin.
Illus. by Keith Ward.

1935 Platt & Munk, New York. (Platt & Munk Classic Series)
Reprint of 1930 Altemus *Little Black Sambo Story Book*.

1939 Samuel Gabriel, New York.

1940 David McKay Co., Philadelphia. (Talking Book Series)
Illus. by Helen Bannerman. Told by Helen Myers. Directed by Will Adams and John Drake. RCA Victor recording with sound effects, color, and incidental music.

1941 J.B. Lippincott, Philadelphia.
Reprint edition of Stokes "Authorized Version."

1942 Grosset & Dunlap, New York.
Illus. by Robert Moore.

1943 Duenewald Printing Corp., New York.
Animations by Julian Wehr.
Also, same book produced by Duenewald, but published by E.P. Dutton & Co., New York.

1943 American Crayon Co., Sandusky, Ohio. (Old Faithful Book)
Illus. by Fern Bisel Peat.

1948 Simon & Schuster, New York. (Little Golden Library)
Illus. by Gustaf Tenggren.

1950 Whitman, Racine, Wisconsin. (Tell-A-Tale Books)
Illus. by Suzanne.

1953 Whitman, Racine, Wisconsin.
Illus. by Gladys Turley Michell.

1972 Platt & Munk, New York.
Illus. by Eulalie (see 1925).
Revised art and some copy.

Still in print: Lippincott's "Authorized Version" (see 1941 and 1900).

In Other Countries or Languages

Does not include original 1899 Grant Richards publication in London (see text) or subsequent editions by Richards and Chatto & Windus, also of London.

1921 *Histoire du Petit Nègre Sambo.* Stokes, New York.
Tr. by Madeleine Blériot Johnson.

1935 George J. McLeod, Ltd., Toronto. (Enlarged Picture Library)
Illus. by Cobb X. Shinn.
See U.S. - 1925 - Whitman.

1935 *El Negrito Sambo.* Editorial Molino, Barcelona.
Illustrado por Frank Dobias.
See U.S. - before 1929 - Macmillan.

1943 Smithers & Bonellie, Toronto.
Canadian agent for E.P. Dutton (See U.S. - 1943).

1947 *El Negrito Sambo.* Ediciones Zodiaco, Barcelona.
Tr. por M. del Rosario Cone de Cela.
Libros Animados por Julian Wehr. (Serie Blacanieves)
See U.S. - 1943 - Duenewald/Dutton.

1948 *Sambo el Zinqui el Saghir.* Simon & Schuster, New York.
Text in Arabic.
See U.S. - 1948 - Simon & Schuster.

1949 *Sambo Het Kleine Zwarte Jongetje.* Simon & Schuster, New York.
Text in Dutch. Bewerkt Door Annie M.G. Schmidt.
With Tenggren illustrations. See U.S. - 1948 - Simon & Schuster.

1953/54 *Harpatkot Sambo ha-Kushi ka-katan.* Tel-Aviv (no pub.)
Tr. by Shimshon Meltzer. Title transliterated from Hebrew.

1954 Clark, Irwin & Co., Ltd., Toronto.
Canadian agent for British publishers Chatto & Windus.

1958 *Sambo das Kleine Negerlein.* Dech, München.
Bilder von Gustav Tenggren. (Dien Goldene Kinderbücher)
See U.S. - 1948 - Simon & Schuster.

n.d. *El Negrito Sambo.* Juventud, Barcelona. (In LC Catalog 1967)
Illus. de J. Viñals.

1973 *Historiem om Lille Svarte Sambo.* Gyldendal, Copenhagan.
Fortalt og illustreret af Helen Bannerman.

In Collected Works

Bobbs Merrill Primer. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1929
Illus. by Vera Stone Norman.

Harper, Wilhelmina, comp.
The Gunniwolf and Other Merry Tales. Philadelphia: McKay, n.d.
(Listed in *Subject and Title Index to Short Stories for Children.*
Chicago: American Library Association, 1955.)

Hutchinson, Veronica S., comp. and retel.
Chimney Corner Stories: Tales for Little Children. New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1925. Illus. by Lois Lenski.

Johnson, Elizabeth, comp.
Anthology of Children's Literature. (Listed in *Children's Catalog,* 1956.)

Miller, Olive Beaupré, ed.
My Book House, Vol. 2. Chicago: The Book House for Children; now, United Educators, 1937-1971. Illustrations and text revised.

O'Connor, B., comp.
Better Homes and Gardens Storybook. (Listed in *Children's Catalog,* 1951.)

Power, E.L., comp.
Blue Caravan Tales. (Listed in *Children's Catalog,* 1936.)

The Real Story Book. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1927.

Other Adaptations

Chorpenning, Charlotte
Rama and the Tigers; a Comedy-fantasy from a Story by Helen Bannerman. Chicago: Coach House Press, 1954. Published also with the title: *Little Black Sambo and the Tigers.*

Hubbard, Margaret Ann
Little Black Sambo. Boston; Los Angeles: Walter H. Baker Co., 1936 (Baker's royalty plays). Based on Helen Bannerman's story.

Kaufman, H.S.
"Little Black Sambo," in *Ring Up the Curtain,* ed. by M.J. Moses. (Listed in *Children's Catalog, 1936.)*

Little Sambo (sound filmstrip). Margaret Bradfield and Associates/McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960. (Children's Stories) 52fr, color, 35mm. Disc: ls, 33.3rpm, 10 min. "Based on the Young America filmstrip *Little Black Sambo* in the series Primary Grade Stories, set D."

Munger, M.P.
"Little Black Sambo." Puppet play in *Book of Puppets,* by M.P. Munger. (Listed in *Children's Catalog,* 1936)

Reich , Molka
. . . *Little Black Sambo.* National Service Bureau Publication (Scripts) No. 56. New York: U.S. Works Progress Administration, 1938. "Reproduced from typewritten copy. Drama in three scenes, based on the story by Helen Bannerman."

Little Black Sambo Stories by Other Authors

Bennett, Juanita C., illus.
A New Story of Little Black Sambo. (No author given.) Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1932. Story also included in the 1934 Whitman *Little Black Sambo* illus. by Jordan.

Ver Beck, Frank (William Francis), author and illus.
Little Black Sambo and the Baby Elephant, 1925.
Little Black Sambo and the Tiger Kitten, 1926.
Little Black Sambo and the Monkey People, 1928.
Little Black Sambo in the Bears' Den, 1930.
Little Black Sambo and the Crocodiles, 1930.
All published by Altemus of Philadelphia (Wee Books for Wee Folks).

Appendix C
OTHER BOOKS BY HELEN BANNERMAN

Story of Little Black Mingo. New York: Stokes, 1902.

Mingo is an orphan who lives with a wicked old woman, Black Noggy. Captured by a mugger (crocodile), Mingo is helped to escape by a mongoose. Black Noggy is swallowed by the mugger and both explode, to the satisfaction of Mingo and her new friend.

Story of Little Black Quibba. New York: Stokes, 1903.

When the doctor tells Quibba that his sick mother will not recover unless she has twenty mangoes every day, he sets out to find them. His search is ultimately successful after a threatening snake and elephant kill themselves in their argument over him.

Story of Little Kettlehead; An Awful Warning to Bad Babes. New York: Stokes, 1904. (Originally published in London as ***Story of Little Dogchie-head.***)

Kettlehead is a white girl who disobediently plays with fire. When her head is accidentally burned off, the helpful cook ties a kettle under her bonnet to deceive her parents. When Father Christmas gives her a beautiful doll's head, she glues it on her neck and never goes near the fire again.

Pat and the Spider; The Biter Bit. New York: Stokes, 1905.

Pat eagerly crawls through a "telescope" bamboo to become small, but he regrets his act when menaced by a bird, a spider, and a tiger. Skillfully using the magical bamboo to his advantage, Pat tricks the tiger into eating the poisonous spider, thus finishing off both enemies before resuming his natural size. (Pat is white.)

Story of the Teasing Monkey. New York: Stokes, 1907.

Jacko, a mischievous monkey, is caught and held captive by a pair of fierce lions until a greedy bear accidentally helps him to escape.

Story of Little Black Quasha. New York: Stokes, 1908.

When Quasha is rewarded with a penny for helping an old woman, she buys a humorous book and reads it aloud in the jungle. Attracted by her voice, tigers creep up and want to eat her. She is rescued by an old frog, who provokes the tigers into fighting each other.

Story of Little Black Bobtail. New York: Stokes, 1909.

Little Black Rag and Little Black Tag are an orphaned brother and sister whose infant sibling, Bobtail, is swept away from them in a flood. After an adventure with an empty ship and a polar bear, the children are joyfully united.

Sambo and the Twins. New York: Stokes, 1936.

The twins are new additions to Sambo's family. He promptly names them Little Black Woof and Little Black Moof and cares for them lovingly. When they are stolen by wicked monkeys and carried into the top of a tall tree in the jungle, Sambo rescues them with the assistance of a kindly eagle.

Jumbo Sambo. Philadelphia: Stokes/Lippincott, 1942.

No new material. Contents: The Story of Little Black Sambo; The Story of Sambo and the Twins; The Story of Little Black Quasha; The Story of Little Black Bobtail; The Story of the Teasing Monkey; The Story of Little Kettlehead.

Story of Little White Squibba. London: Chatto & Windus, 1966. Not published in the United States.

Squibba is a white girl who dresses up in new clothes for a walk in the jungle. She gives items of her clothing to various threatening animals and manages to tame them all, after which they accompany her home for tea.

—This list concerns itself with publication in the United States. In most cases, each title was first published in the preceding year in London.

Appendix D

RECOMMENDATIONS OF LITTLE BLACK SAMBO IN BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations refer to the authorized Stokes/Lippincott edition by Helen Bannerman. Reverse chronological order is used to emphasize the most recent listing in periodically revised publications.

1973 Kujoth, Jean Spealman. *Best-Selling Children's Books.* Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1973.

"The jolly and exciting tale . . . has been universally loved by generations of children . . . This is a book that speaks the common language of all nations, and has added more to the joy of little children than perhaps any other story." p. 18-19.

1968 *Best Books for Children.* New York: Bowker.
Included in all BBC lists from 1959 through 1968. Subsequently omitted.

"This humorous tale of a little Indian boy and his adventure with tigers is still an all-time favorite." p. 21.

1966 *Children's Catalog.* New York: H.W. Wilson.
1st ed., 1909; 2nd ed., 1917; 3rd ed., 1925; *4th ed., 1930; *5th ed., 1936; *6th ed., 1941 (also *Sambo and the Twins*); **7th ed., 1946 (also . . . *Twins* and *Jumbo Sambo*); **8th ed., 1951 (also . . . *Twins*); **9th ed., 1956; *10th ed., 1961; *11th ed., 1966. Omitted from 12th ed., 1971.
*"recommended for first purchase/especially recommended by the consultants," **"doubly recommended."

1st - 4th ed.: "Tiger story with colored pictures. Very popular."
5th - 8th ed.: "First published about 1900, this naive, humorous story of Black Sambo, his beautiful clothes and his adventures with the tigers is still one of the most popular stories for little children."

9th ed.: Same annotation, but "in India" added after "tigers."

10th, 11th ed.: "First published about 1900, this is the naive, humorous story of Black Sambo, his beautiful clothes and his adventures with the tigers in the jungles of India. Illustrated 'with simple, amusing coloured pictures. A little book of enduring charm.' *Four to Fourteen.*"

1965 *The Children's Bookshelf; a Guide to Books for and About Children.* New York: Child Study Assoc. of America, 1965. First pub. 1962.

"The little Indian boy's adventures with tigers in a story loved by many generations." p. 63.

1962 Fisher, Margery. *Intent Upon Reading: a Critical Appraisal of Modern Fiction for Children.* New York: Watts, 1962.

"continuously in print. Best of all repetitive tales for the very young" p. 32.

1956 Bhatawdekar, Shakuntala (Mrs.). *Books for Asian Children; a Selective*

List of Publications from World Literature Suitable for Use in Asia, in the original, in translation or in adaptation. Paris: UNESCO, 14 Sept. 1956.

"A funny little story for very young children. Little Black Sambo gets new clothes, shoes and an umbrella. He goes for a walk wearing the new clothes. On the way he meets the cruel tigers and loses everything. How he gets his clothes back and what happens next is interesting reading." p. 4. (Publisher listed is Lippincott, 1946.)

1956 Lines, Kathleen M., comp. *Four to Fourteen; a Library of Books for Children*. Intro. by Walter de la Mare. First ed., 1950. Second ed., 1956. Cambridge: National Book League, 1956.

"The engaging story of a little black boy, his new clothes, and his adventurous walk in the jungle, with simple, amusing coloured pictures. A little book of enduring charm." p. 7, 2nd ed.

"The engaging and dearly loved story of a little black boy and his adventurous walk in the jungle, with crude but amusing coloured pictures." p. 16, 1st ed.

1953 Arbuthnot, May Hill, et al. *Children's Books Too Good to Miss*. Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1948, 1953.

"This is often the child's first hero tale, and what a satisfying hero Sambo is! His parents give him wonderful clothes to wear; he loses them to ferocious tigers, but he isn't downed. He uses his wits, rescues his clothes, and turns the silly tigers to good use. No wonder small children love Sambo. He is just the kind of conquering hero they dream of becoming. Originally published about 1900." p. 14.

1948 Association of Children's Book Editors. *A Selected List of Books for Boys and Girls*. New York: New York Times, 1948.

1945 *The Booklist for Church Libraries*. Baptist Sunday School Board/ Baptist Book Stores, 1945.

1944 *A Child's Own Library*. By children's librarians of the Westchester Library Association. Children's Assoc. Book and Toy Fair, 1944.

"A favorite little book which no child should miss."

1942 Association for Childhood Education. *A Bibliography of Books for Young Children*. Washington: 1939, 1941, 1942.

"This story is a prime favorite with children. The original small edition is the best." p. 39.

Other editions also included on ACE's annual suggested purchasing lists of inexpensive books, from 1937-41 and 1947-59 (1941-47 not available for examination).

1941 *The Negro;* a Selected List for School Libraries of Books by or About the Negro in Africa and America. Compiled by the Division of School Libraries. Nashville, Tenn.: State Dept. of Education, 1941. (Revised edition of 1935 original.)

1940 Buest, Nora E. *500 Books for Children.* U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bulletin 1939, No. 11. Washington: U.S. Gov. Pr. Off., 1940

"Little Black Sambo, the beloved hero of the jungle, in the small authorized American edition."

1938 American Library Association. *Catalog.* Chicago: 1938.
Also includes *Sambo and the Twins.*

_____. *Catalog, 1926.* Chicago: 1926.

"This nonsense story about a little black boy is told with few and simple words and many bright pictures. A large edition is now available" p. 849.

_____. *Catalog: 1912-1921.* Chicago: 1923.

"A little book with colored pictures and a nonsense story which delights children under six."

1927 Davis, Mary Gould, ed. *Stories; a List of Stories to Tell and to Read Aloud.* New York: New York Public Library, 1927.

"Like Sir James Barrie's policeman, Little Black Sambo is 'infallible.' Little children never seem to tire of hearing his adventures." p. 40.

1926 Bonner, Mary Graham. *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading.* New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1926.

"A popular story of a little black boy and a tiger, with good pictures." p. 55.

1919 Andrews. E.V., comp. *A Graded List of Library Books for the Elementary and the Intermediate Schools.* Training Dept. Library. Yspsilanti, Michigan: Michigan State Normal College, 1919.

1915 Humble, Marion, ed. *Children's Books for First Purchase;*
Recommended by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission. Madison, Wisc.: H.C. Netherwood Printing Co., 1915.

"'Not artistic, but dearly loved by little people.' *Oregon.*"

1912 Arnold, Gertrude W., comp. *A Mother's List of Books for Children.* Third ed. Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1912 (c1909).

"Written and illustrated by an Englishwoman in India for her two small daughters, Little Black Sambo, with its absurd story, and funny crude pictures in color, will delight young children of all lands." p. 23.

1911 Coussens, Penrhyn W. *One Thousand Books for Children.* Chicago: McClurg, 1911.

"A popular tiger story for little children. The illustrations are very helpful in making the story understood." p. 96.

Appendix E
ILLUSTRATORS OF U.S. EDITIONS

Dates indicate first edition.

Bannerman, Helen. New York: Stokes, 1900.
Cloud, Claude Carey. New York: Blue Ribbon Press, 1934.
Dobias, Frank. New York: Macmillan, n.d. (before 1929).
Eulalie. New York: Platt & Munk, 1925.
Gruelle, John B. New York: Cupples & Leon, 1917.
Jordan, Nina R. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1934.
Kane, Wilma. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1944.
Michell, Gladys Turley. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1953.
Miloche, Hilda. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1944.
Moore, Robert. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1942.
Neill, John R. Chicago: Reilly & Britton, 1908.
Peat, Fern Bisel. Akron, Ohio: Saalfield, 1932; Cleveland, Ohio: Harter Pub. Co., 1931; Sandusky, Ohio: American Crayon Co., 1946 (3rd ed.).
Price, Margaret Evans. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1934.
Shinn, Cobb X. Chicago: A. Whitman & Co., 1925.
Stephenson, Eunice. Philadelphia and Chicago: John C. Winston, 1930.
Suzanne. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1950.
Tenggren, Gustaf. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1948.
Thurston, Clara Bell. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1926.
Ward, Keith. Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman, 1935.
Wehr, Julian. New York: Duenewald/E.P. Dutton, 1943.
Wiese, Kurt. Garden City, New York: Garden City Pub. Co., 1933.